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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

PREACHED, ON

THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE

UNITED CHURCH

May 8th, 1892,

BY REV. THEODORE T. MUNGER, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH;

AND AN

Historical Sketch of the United Society,

Presented to the Society, April 28th, 1879, by

HON. HENRY E. PARDEE,

then Clerk of the Society.

PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED CHURCH,
NEW HAVEN, CONN.
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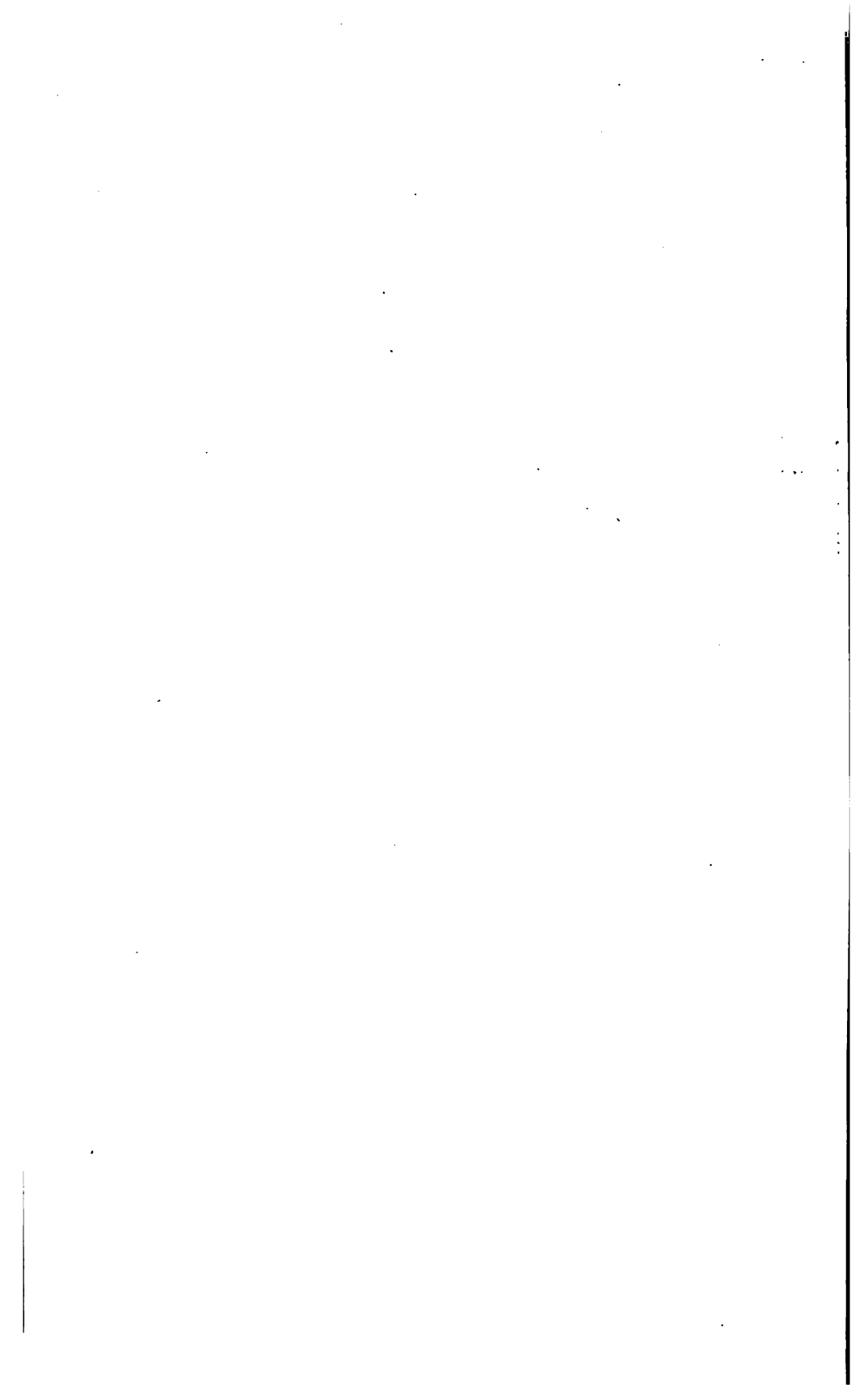


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PREFATORY NOTE.

The celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the United Church began on May 7, 1892, when a mural tablet commemorating the main events in its history was set up in the vestibule of the church, at the right of the main entrance. In the evening, the members of the church and congregation met in the Chapel. Simeon E. Baldwin acted as moderator, and brief addresses were made by Horace P. Hoadley, Prof. George B. Stevens, William J. Thompson, Lyman E. Munson, S. H. Moseley, Walter B. Law, and Dr. S. D. Gilbert.

Mr. Thompson's reminiscences ran back nearly to the time of the erection of the present church. It was, he said, one of the last brick buildings in New Haven, in which the bricks were laid with the Flemish bond. When a boy, he once went up into the belfry to assist the sexton in tolling the passing-bell, for a funeral. There were then few large trees in the town, except upon the Green, and although it was in the Summer they could see the funeral procession moving through Grove Street to what was then known as the New Cemetery. The Green was still dotted with tomb stones, around the churches, and often in the Spring a sudden sinking of the ground over some decayed coffin, would mark the site of a forgotten grave. Every family brought its own foot-stove at the Sunday services, and Mr. Merwin, the pastor, sometimes preached in Winter, with his overcoat and gloves on. The pulpit was elevated on high mahogany pillars, and, if it had been lower, the minister would have been hidden from the view of many, by the flaring bonnets which were then in fashion.

A piece of the stair-rail of the old blue meeting-house was exhibited, which ever since the demolition of that building has been in use in the attic staircase of the old Herrick house on College Street. It retains its original color of a dull blue.

Mr. Harry P. Miles, the assistant pastor, read the following notes taken in conversation with two of the oldest members of the church, who were unable to be present at the meeting:

"Mary Ann Miller, now ninety years old, remembers when Dr. Horace Bushnell, in 1880, preached for six weeks in the Third Church on Chapel Street. He was followed by Dr. Taylor, Mr. Boardman and Dr. Cleaveland, the last named having come to New Haven to attend Dr. Taylor's lectures and beginning to serve the Third Church as its pastor while still pursuing his theological studies. Miss Miller remembers well the first service held by Dr. Cleaveland in what was then known as Saunders' Hall, on the corner of

Chapel and Orange Streets, after the little flock had been turned out of the Chapel Street Church. The handful of followers sat on plain benches and the Doctor had only a little table for a pulpit, but his sermon from the text "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small," is remembered to this day. Soon congregations increased, and Dr. Cleavland finally led his flock to the Court Street Church and was for thirty-three years their devoted and beloved pastor.

Mrs. Abigail Lee, now eighty-five years old, remembers well the old Blue Meeting House, in which she was baptized by the Rev. Mr. Merwin in the year 1815, being then six years old. She remembers the building as it stood on the corner of Elm and Church Streets, with entrances open to either street. The interior with its square pews about the walls is clearly pictured in her mind.*

A social re-union in the Chapel parlors closed the evening.

On Sunday, May 8th, a part of the historical discourse of the pastor which is now published was delivered in the morning, and the remainder in the evening. The hymns sung were those beginning, "*O Lord, our God, arise*," to the tune of *Lisbon*; † "*Let saints below in concert sing*," to the tune of *Boardman*; "*O God! beneath thy guiding hand*," ‡ to the tune of *Duke Street*; "*For all the saints who from their labors rest*," to the tune of *Sarum*; and the two following hymns which had been written for the occasion:

Hymn at the morning service, § Tune, *Hamburg*.

1 Praise be to God that on this ground,
To public use so early set,
And set by men who kings uncrowned,
The King of kings is worshiped yet.

2 Praise be to God that in this place
From age to age His house has stood,
A daily witness to the grace
That turns all evil into good.

3 Praise be to God that we, who here
United meet, can still maintain
The faith our fathers held so dear,
The freedom they gave all to gain.

* In conversation with another member of the church, Mrs. Timothy P. Beers, now 98 years old, Mr. Miles was informed that she had always supposed the Fair Haven Church was so called because the worshippers from Fair Haven came there. She was not then in the church, and said that when a little girl she used to hear these people reflected upon as walking bare-foot from Fair Haven to the Green, where they sat down and put on their shoes.

† Composed by Daniel Read, who was a member of the Church in the United Society from 1803 to 1886.

‡ Written by Rev. Leonard Bacon, D.D., LL.D., in 1838, to be sung on the 200th anniversary of the formation of the First Church, of which he was then the pastor.

§ Written by Simeon E. Baldwin.

- 4 Praise be to God, their prayer was heard;
 The greater light they looked to see
 Yet break forth from His holy Word,*
 Has come to make that faith more free.

Hymn at the evening service,† Tune, *Aurelia*.

- 1 Great God, the fathers' praises
 Their children's children bring,
 To thee whose love ne'er ceases,
 Our Guardian and our King.
 Thou art the God of nations,
 Unchangeable thy name,
 Through endless generations,
 From age to age the same.
- 2 Within this sacred portal
 Our fathers prayed of old,
 And joined the ranks immortal
 When life's brief tale was told.
 And all our life is lightened
 Because their love was strong,
 And all our hope is brightened
 Because their faith was long.
- 3 We bless thee for their living,
 For truth which made them free;
 We bless thee for their loving,
 Grant us like love to thee.
 By holy vision lighted
 We join their heavenly song,
 For to one church united
 Both they and we belong.
- 4 Thou art our inspiration,
 And thou O God, our end;
 Thou source of our creation
 To thee our spirits tend.
 The heavens hymn thy praises,
 The earth doth worship thee,
 Thou hope of all the ages,
 To all eternity.

* John Robinson's last words, when the Pilgrim fathers sailed from Delfthaven, in 1690. were "I beseech you, remember it is an article of your church covenant, that ye be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God."

† Written by Mrs. T. T. Munger.

Mr. Bostwick of New York, who was present at the services, was the third child baptized in the present church edifice.

On April 28th, 1879, the late Hon. Henry E. Pardee, then clerk of the Society, presented at its annual meeting, a carefully prepared sketch of its history. The thanks of the Society were voted to Judge Pardee for his labor of love, and the paper was recorded at length in Volume 7 of its Records. To make the result of his researches more clearly accessible hereafter to the members of the congregation, the sketch is now printed in this pamphlet, which has been compiled by a committee of the church.

The following vote of the Society was passed at its annual meeting, May 9th, 1892.

"Voted, that the Society desires to express to the pastor its high appreciation of the able and thoughtful historical discourse which he delivered yesterday, and is glad to know that the Church has arranged for its publication."

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

PSALM LXXX : 8—11.

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt ; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it.

Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.

She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

I SAMUEL XII : 7.

Now therefore stand still that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers.

THE first chapter in the history of Connecticut is written upon its armorial bearings. The three vines that fill the center of the shield are supposed to represent the three original settlements at Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. The motto : "*Qui transtulit sustinet*," *He who transplanted us, sustains us*,—repeats the religious trust expressed in the pictured vines. The scripture to which they allude, describes the early history of these colonies ;—they were brought, as it were, out of Egypt ; the heathen were cast out to make a place for them ; they had room, and like healthy vines, they took deep root and filled the land ; they overspread the hills ; they peopled the shores of the sea and the banks of the rivers.

Connecticut is the only State whose arms and motto are distinctively religious, unless it be Rhode Island. All others are based upon some phase of their history, or some physical peculiarity, or some political or economic feature, or some general and lofty sentiment ; ours are indeed historical, but they are first and throughout *religious*. This peculiarity is not lessened by the fact that behind the shield there are half-hidden flags

ready to be carried into battle and at its base are cannon ball that are not introduced for ornament. The settlement of this Commonwealth began in religion but it was religion that embraced the State; they did not go on side by side,—they were one. For many years the New Haven Colony recognized no sovereign but God, and no laws but such as they found directly or impliedly in the Bible. Even so late as 1661, when the Regicides were demanded by the king, Governor Leete, of brave and lawyer-like memory, hesitated to acknowledge the royal authority to search for the offending judges: “we honor his Majesty, but we have tender consciences; before we own his Majesty we would first know whether his Majesty would own us.” He issued search-warrants as a matter of prudence, but took care that they should be ineffective, as holding allegiance to a higher sovereign.

It was under this union of Church and State—not indeed such as had been left in England but still a union which was real—that the New Haven Colony began its existence. It shaped and constituted its history for almost a hundred years. It was the breaking up of this union, its disintegration in the minds of the people, that paved the way to the founding of this church. The religious upheaval in England which led to the settlement of New England included two sets of protestants, known as Separatists and Non-Conformists. The Separatists, as the term indicates, utterly withdrew from the church of England and renounced all connection with it. Of these, only the Pilgrims came to this country. The Puritans, who settled Boston and Salem and New Haven, were Non-Conformists; that is, they aimed to reform the Church but did not separate themselves from it; they would not conform to the Church but they refused to leave it. The distinction faded out as Separatist and Non-Conformist lived side by side on this continent, but the Church conception with its ingrained idea of right and prerogative lived on and prevailed, especially in this colony. It is necessary to keep this fact steadily in mind in order to understand the early history of the colony, and to induce that charity of judgment with which it should be viewed. We must remember as we recall the history of the First Church during the period when this Church was extricating itself from it and for some years after, that it is the his-

tory of a State as well as of a Church, and that sentiments and actions which seemed to spring out of the Church may properly be referred to the State; that is, they may be regarded as political rather than religious. The distinction is real, and should be made in behalf of men who were moved by the fervors of both politics and religion. On the other hand, we do not regard the founders of this Church with sufficient honor unless we keep in mind that their separation from the First Church was a political as well as a religious movement. In fact, the political features strike deeper and are more important than the religious. The religious changes would have soon come on, even as they did, but the political changes were radical and fundamental. In reviewing the history of those days, I confess to a deepened feeling of charity for the conservative, law-abiding spirit that actuated the First Church, and of warmer admiration for the founders of this Church who were not conservative nor law-abiding, but were moved by stronger considerations than regard for the past, and who felt an allegiance higher than that due to formal law.

Their secession from the First Church, doubtful in its legality and induced by mingled considerations, was, in fact, an impeachment and a breaking down of the union of Church and State. In short they were the radicals and reformers of their day, and they not only "built better than they knew," but they destroyed more than they planned to do.

Before speaking of the founding of this Church, it will be well to say a few words in regard to the earlier history of the colony and the state of things at the time.

The first settlements in what is now Connecticut, were made in 1635, at Hartford and Saybrook. In April, 1838, a company composed chiefly of merchants from London, came hither in two or three small vessels, having tarried awhile in Boston. During the first fourteen months, while clearing away the forests and raising their first crops, they prayed and fasted and debated concerning the Church and Commonwealth they should form. In June, 1639, they met in Mr. Newman's barn, which probably stood near the corner of Temple and Grove streets, and laid the foundations of their ecclesiastical order, and of their civil government. Dr. Bacon, in his "*Thirteen Historical Discourses*,"—the enduring monument of a great name,—is careful to in-

sist that the Church and the Commonwealth were not identical. He is undoubtedly correct, but as one stands off at this distance of time, it is not easy to distinguish one from the other. Subtract the Church from the State and there would have been little left. The organizations and the administrations were distinct, but the code of the commonwealth was the Bible, even as it was the law of the Church, while only church members could hold public office or discharge the functions of citizens, and all were subject to taxation for the support of the Church. If they were not identical they were very closely united, and the Church had so much the advantage of the State that a certain man—probably Rev. Samuel Eaton—dissented from the position that all civil business should be conducted only by church members, claiming that “free planters ought not to give this power out of their hands.” His protest was not heeded, but it was taken up and carried out a hundred years later by the founders of this Church. If so long a time had not elapsed after Mr. Eaton’s solitary dissent, we might properly look back to him as the civil if not the religious father of our Church. As it is, we must think of him only as a century ahead of his age, a voice crying in the wilderness, but silenced and overborne by the great Davenport.

Having formed their Commonwealth, they proceeded to perfect or re-organize their church, choosing twelve men, who in turn chose seven of their number who should, by covenanting together and then receiving others, constitute the church. This was done August 22nd, 1639, the same day according to tradition on which the church at Milford was gathered. One name—Punderson—from these seven is still represented in our Church by his descendants.

As I have said, Dr. Bacon is careful to assert that the church made no claim of a divine right to rule the commonwealth, and that there was no confusion of the distinct provinces of the church and the civil state; all of which is literally true, but it is also true that the relation between church and state was so close and the prerogatives in the state claimed by the church were so great, that nearly all the evils naturally resulting from absolute union followed. When no man can hold office or vote or have any share in the administration of government unless

he is a member of the church, "it follows as the night, the day," that men will enter the church in order to obtain civil privileges. Such a motive defeats the end and violates the nature of the church, and surely breeds confusion and corruption.

It is presumptuous for us in this far off day to undertake to say what the first settlers ought to have done in this matter; it may be difficult to determine what was necessary or most expedient. It is possible that in their weakness, it was necessary that the two should be united as they were, in order that each might stand, and that had either been without the support of the other, they would have fallen a prey to their natural enemies—anarchy and schism. As it was, they supported each other and maintained social and ecclesiastical peace for nearly a century, but not without loss and a slow heaping up of evil consequences.

The piety, the moral sincerity and earnestness of the first settlers kept both church and state pure for a time, but at last the church became simply a pathway into civil rights—a means and not an end. Formalism took the place of faith, conduct grew lax, and a dry rot of indifference overspread the church and community. The most serious result was that, entwined in each other, neither could grow and develop along its own line. The church hindered the growth of those seeds of freedom and popular government which had been brought from England, and the state choked the currents of spiritual life in the church. The theology was of a sort that sadly needed modifying;—a hard and desperate type of Calvinism, in which electing decrees swamped all the characteristics of the gospel and reduced man to a simple waiter for influences that might or might not come,—a horrible and grotesque perversion of both the divine and human nature, but it was a theology that suited well enough those who must find their way into civil life through the church.

Now that we see the evils growing out of the union of Church and State, it is easy to criticise and condemn, but looking deeper and closer, criticism changes into admiration for what our fathers attempted, and into more than admiration for the lofty conceptions which they had dreamed and thought out. They did not come here so much for liberty as to establish a theocracy, a government by and for God, a State to which the

church should be the soul, a Church which should feed the State with the very bread of heaven. If this be a dream, it is the loftiest that ever haunted the mind of man. A dream, a vision it may be, but it is the ideal towards which society is moving if God is the Sovereign and Father of men. It will come in due time, but it cannot be forced. It will appear at last when the holy city has fully descended out of heaven, but it cannot be secured by saying: "Go to, let us establish the city of God." This was the sublime mistake of our fathers as they built their Church and State in this wilderness,—a mistake but wiser and nobler than most men's achievements. As I have said, it may have been the necessary condition of their starting, but none the less did it meet the fate of all premature attempts to realize the divine ideal of human society. Along with other causes, it brought on that spiritual lethargy, which in turn induced that great reaction and spiritual awakening in the middle of the last century, which constitutes the most important chapter in the history of the church on this continent. "The great awakening" as it was called, marked the most important crisis through which the American churches have passed. It was the breaking up of the old order and the beginning of a new one. It sundered the last link which bound the churches here to the prelatical church of the mother country. It was a political preparation for the war of Independence. It drove entering wedges into a theology that was incompatible with that new sense of man as an active and responsible agent which freedom and self-government were fostering. It was a movement wild, extravagant, fanatical, but it was wholesome; it cleared the air; it burned up a great deal of theological and ecclesiastical rubbish in its hot fires; it set free the religious nature of man, and if it went to extremes, it only showed how close and strong had been the repression. If it had the marks of fanaticism and seemed to be simply a religious contagion, underneath there were the dread movements of conscience and the deep searchings of the soul after God. But however it may look as we now turn back to it, and whatever its excesses, it marked the condition out of which it came, and of which it was the reaction; action and reaction are equal, and interpret each other. It met its own reaction in due time and died away, but it was not therefore a useless movement. It is

by such movements that the world swings pendulum-like along its way; it is by violations of the law of gravitation that the hands of the dial point out the hours of progress.

"The great awakening" began in England,—induced by causes similar to those here—under the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitfield. In 1740, Whitfield visited New Haven, having come down from Northampton where he had met Jonathan Edwards, whose church, five years before, had been the scene of a great revival. It is pleasant to think of these men, one the greatest theologian of the age, the other the greatest preacher, holding converse together and debating their small differences as Edwards accompanied his departing guest on horseback a few miles down the river. It is needless to say which was the master-mind in the conference. On reaching New Haven Whitfield was entertained by Mr. James Pierpont, the brother of Mrs. Edwards, whose house stood on the spot where Mrs. Bristol now resides. Whitfield remained several days, preaching in the meeting-house, and also in the open air in front of Mr. Pierpont's house, and therefore near the place where we are now assembled.

Then began the trouble and stir which led to the formation of this church. His preaching acted like a magnet upon the First Church, drawing off those like-minded with himself and leaving the rest. The line was sharp, and the points of difference were not left unemphasized. One does not form a very good opinion of either the charity or the courtesy of the parties, especially on the "New Light" side; for about this time there came into use those two phrases—Old Lights and New Lights, which lingered until within the memory of some before me. Whitfield most unwisely and in flagrant disregard of Christ's words—"judge not," denounced as unconverted all ministers who did not favor revivals. It was the common English blunder, begun thus early, of inability to judge aright American affairs. There were many ministers in England of whom charity itself could not speak as converted, but New England from the first until now has had a godly ministry. Of no church, of no denomination, orthodox or heretical, can it be truly said that its ministers were or are unconverted.

Mr. Noyes, the pastor of the First Church at the time, was

one of those who came under Whitfield's denunciation. He did not wholly sympathize with revivals as they were then carried on, with their shoutings and bodily agitations and fallings and trances, and he was more than suspected of Arminianism; he was a dull preacher and personally unpopular. The history of his ministry is pathetic in the extreme, but it is impossible to read it without a certain admiration for the man as a stout fighter who got the worst of it although often having the best of the argument.

Half his church left him and formed this Church; the College, led by the strong and intolerant Clap, assailed him, withdrew from his congregation and formed the College Church; an effort was made to evict him from the Board of Fellows on account of his theological opinions,—an effort which he ably and successfully resisted, thus saving the College from committing a great blunder. Such a man is to be remembered with mingled pity and commendation.

Ever after the visit of Whitfield, there was a restlessness in the Church, due to the unpopularity of the pastor and the growing divergence of the two parties. Matters were brought to a crisis a year later—1741—by Rev. James Davenport, a grandson of the founder, who forsook a sober ministry in Long Island and came into Connecticut as a revivalist. Half insane and wholly fanatical, he went throughout the State preaching, if that could be called preaching which consisted largely in shouting and leaping and other bodily agitations. He was admitted to the pulpit of the First Church but was afterward excluded as his excesses became intolerable. From that time there began to be an organized opposition to Mr. Noyes. I should be sorry to think that Mr. Davenport was the cause of the secession from the First Church; he was simply the occasion not the cause. He himself ran a brief career, came to his senses, confessed his errors and extravagances and returned to a quiet ministry but still kept within the New Light party. The cause of the separation lay in dissatisfaction with Mr. Noyes' ministry which was brought out by the preaching of Whitfield and Davenport. But there was a deeper cause even than this. It was the working out and elimination of old world ideas which had no true place in this new world of freedom and popular government. It was the reaction of a

theology that surely issues in one of two ways—a dead orthodoxy or deadly heresy, for the simple reason that it is not in accord with reason. This result showed itself in the First Church ;—the Church itself was sunk in dull and lifeless orthodoxy ; the pastor—an able and good man—verged towards heresy : if salvation is by election alone, and works are a means of grace in case the elected one should be called, then he would push good works ; and hence the charge of Semi-Arminianism. What more could he have done unless he had changed his theology ?

Three months after Mr. Davenport's visit, a petition for a division of the society was presented at a society's meeting, which, as it marks the actual beginning of this church, I will read :

“ To the First Society in the town of New Haven ;—Whereas we, the subscribers, have, by long and sorrowful experience, found, that the preaching and conduct of the Rev. Mr. Noyes has been in great measure unprofitable to us, and that we also have reason to think that he differs from us in some points of faith, we desire (not as we hope out of any prejudice to the persons of Mr. Noyes and our brethren and friends of the society, to whom we heartily wish all good), that they would allow us, and others that may incline to join with us, to draw off from them in charity, wishing to be a distinct society, that we may put ourselves under the best advantage to worship God, under such means, as he in his good providence may allow and we hope will bless, for our spiritual good and edification.”

The time had not come here or elsewhere when such a petition would be readily granted. It would seem to be the first dictate of reason and religious freedom either to conciliate the petitioners or to grant their request. But there was little religious freedom such as we now recognize, and as for reason, let it not be looked for in an organization that violates by its constitution the first principles of religion. A church is nothing if not free, and enforced worship is of the very essence of unreason.

It is this unconscious look ahead, this instinctive claim of rights, this natural play of reason and common sense on the part of these thirty-eight petitioners that make their action so refreshing. It is the English Revolution come to full harvest ; it

is the war for independence in embryo. I cannot find that any of these men had a full and clear conception of what they were doing beyond that they were doing what they felt they had a natural right to do. They do not seem to have fully realized that they were acting from the generic principles of religious freedom and toleration. They disliked the preaching and the theology of Mr. Noyes, and had become interested in certain measures and methods with which the First Church and its pastor had no sympathy.

If their motives could be analyzed and weighed, it would probably be found that "the great awakening" supplied them with the strongest incentive.

Then began that long strife between this Church and the First, the history of which is not pleasant to remember except as it shows how ecclesiastical liberty came to its full growth. The petitioners had this much to go upon; namely, that there had been two churches in Hartford for many years, both recognized by law, and that recently in Guilford a new society had come into existence by the action of the General Court. It seems probable that the ignoring of these precedents was due to Mr. Noyes who was a stout fighter, and who had the grievance of personal unpopularity to incite him in the conflict.

The next move of the petitioners was to prefer complaints against the pastor, anticipating that if the Church would not entertain them, they must be referred to a council. On asking for such a course, the petitioners were told that the council must consist of the *consociation*.

Few now know what is meant by this term. In 1708 a synod or general council of the churches of Connecticut was held in Saybrook for the purpose of securing a more effective church discipline and a closer communion among the churches. The movement was due in a large degree to the desire of the politicians of the day to bring the churches into such a shape that they could be manipulated for political ends. If the churches could be bound into a compact body and made as it were *one*, like the Presbyterian Churches, they could more easily be made subservient to the State; but *independent* churches are the most unmanageable materials with which politicians have to do,—a fact well illustrated in anti-slavery days when the Presby-

terian Church was morally subsidized by slavery, while the Congregational Churches went their own way, which happened to be *one* way with nearly all. Here and there a church was to be found in which some highly respectable, conservative old-whig politician, or some "south-side" pastor who happened to have a deep sense of what St. Paul wrote to Philemon in regard to Onesimus, succeeded in getting it understood that the church was not averse to the fugitive slave law and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; but such churches were rare. Certainly this church never came under such a suspicion, nor this pulpit in which rifles were pledged for the Kansas conflict; and nothing to my mind hallows it more.

This synod formed what is called the "Saybrook Platform," the chief plank of which was, that it divided the churches into local bodies called *consociations* which should be considered *standing councils*. It was the Presbytery introduced into Congregationalism. It was always a question from the first whether the decisions of the consociation were judicial and final, or only advisory. Even if the latter were the case, no church could go without the consociation for advice, and an *ex parte* council was out of the question. The consociation still exists—a waning body shorn of its doubtful prerogatives and having only a name to live. When pastors of non-consociated churches are invited to a council called to install a minister over a consociated church, the first question they ask is: "What meaneth the presence of the consociation here?" and being meekly assured that it means nothing except that the standing moderator of the consociation shall preside, they proceed as though such a body did not exist. In the early and middle part of this century consociation was considered to be in the interest of the East Windsor Seminary and a conservative theology, but even this peculiarity no longer exists and the body is without significance. Long since it was settled that its powers were neither judicial nor final, except that as to the latter a church could not carry its grievance outside the body.

Our petitioning founders had no mind to go before consociation, knowing that its decision would be favorable to Mr. Noyes, and therefore, as a ground for refusal, "declared that the church was originally independent and had never adopted the Saybrook

Platform and was still independent and not subject to a judicial body such as the consociation had grown to be." In this, they were probably wrong. No records of a vote of adoption can be found, but of the fact that the church was consociated there is no doubt. As the petitioners insisted upon the point they had raised, the question was put to vote in church meeting but the petitioners were excluded from voting. If they had been in the wrong, it was now the Church's turn, and any course the petitioners might take would by contrast be right. It was a case in which revolution was clearly justifiable.

Finding no other way out, the petitioners did the most natural and the best thing they could possibly have done; they trampled the Saybrook Platform under their feet and called an *ex parte* council. Ordinarily, an *ex parte* council is a bad thing; sometimes it is the best thing, because it is free from the snare of compromise.

Before taking this step they formed themselves into a Church on the ground that the First Church had "divested them of their ancient ecclesiastical privileges," and affirmed that they were the church on the original foundation,—as undoubtedly they were in spirit. The true succession of Congregationalism, as it was at the first settlement, is through this Church and not the other. A consociated church forfeits in part its character as an independent church; and such undoubtedly was the church of Davenport and Eaton.

The Act of Toleration which had been passed in 1708, provided for the organization of religious congregations dissenting from the established worship of the colony, though it did not free them from taxation by the Society from which they dissented. Under this Act the church was organized by the advice of a council, called chiefly from Fairfield County, which met on the 5th of May, 1742, at the house of Mr. Samuel Cooke, and having considered all the questions in the case, voted not to set apart the complainants as a second church but to *re-establish* them as the original church on the original foundation, alleging as their ground for such action that the First Church had, by adopting the Saybrook Platform and by excluding the complainants from their ecclesiastical privileges and liberties, really formed another church.

Whether or not this is the church of Davenport and the first settlers, we will leave to the ecclesiastical lawyers, though it is easy to see how strong a demurrer could be urged on the ground that the organizing council was *ex parte*. It would be better for us not to open the question, for the procedure of our founders at this point will not bear the closest scrutiny: they were moved by one motive; they set forth another. They were dissatisfied with Mr. Noyes' ministry,—that was their real incentive; they took their stand on a refusal to recognize consociation, because it offered the best fighting ground. This insincerity is more than half excusable when we consider how great and essential was the point taken. They were indeed building better than they knew. Nothing was more needed at that time than a vigorous blow at consociation. It was incipient Presbyterianism. And what is Presbyterianism? A system that is a standing challenge and invitation to schism by reason of the very closeness with which it binds the churches together. Witness its history in Scotland,—always dividing and always uniting only to divide again; and here also where it flies asunder as fast as one part outgrows the other in intelligence, but always and in all its parts a generation behind the age, retarded by fear of schism which nevertheless surely comes; divided sixty years ago on questions of theology, divided thirty years ago on political questions, and unable ten years later to unite because of divergence in theology, and now once more on the verge of separation over questions of Biblical interpretation and doctrine,—a great and noble church that defeats itself by insisting on the fatal principle that a church is a *government*. Congregationalism may be a shadowy organization, a rope of sand; it may afford easy access to heresy and have no means to check it except by the truth, but it is *free*, and freedom is the first and last requisite of a church. Whatever errors in procedure our founders may have been guilty of, they claimed and secured that freedom in which the churches had been originally constituted and out of which they had partially lapsed.

On the next day—May 7th, 1742, O. S.—which was observed as a day of solemn fasting and prayer, forty-three persons—eighteen men and twenty-five women—subscribed to the confession of faith and church covenant, which had been used from the beginning, and so formed this church. It also made a state-

ment and an additional covenant of such dignity and elevation in expression and thought, that I will transcribe them for further perpetuation.

“Whereas, in addition to other grievances too tedious and unnecessary here to enumerate, of which we would not willingly perpetuate the memory, a considerable part of the First Church in New Haven have lately, (viz. on the 25th of January last,) under the conduct of their present pastor, voted a conformity to the Saybrook Platform, and in consequence of it, (to show more plainly the design of said vote,) at the same time, by their vote, carried to the standing Consociation of this county a complaint against sundry members of said church, thereby owning a judicial and decisive authority in the said stated Consociation, contrary to the known fundamental principle and practice of said church, time out of mind, which has always denied any judicial or decisive authority under Christ, vested in any particular persons or class, over any particular Congregational church, confederated as this; We the subscribers, members of said church, firmly adhering to the Congregational principles and privileges on which the said church was founded, and hath stood unshaken from the beginning, through successive generations, until the 25th day of January last, being by the said innovations hereunto necessitated, apprehend ourselves called of God, in company, to vindicate our ancient rightful powers and privileges, and to put ourselves into a proper capacity for the enjoyment thereof, upon the ancient footing: And for that purpose, do now, under the conduct of Divine Providence, humbly sought, by fasting and prayer, assume a church state of the gospel, on the ancient basis of that church, whereof we stood members in fact, as well as of right, until the unhappy period above mentioned, wherein the pastor and a number of the brethren with him, went off from the ancient foundation as aforesaid.”

“And we with all affection, invite others, the members of said church, who do or may see just cause of grievance at said innovations, to join with us in asserting our ancient rightful powers and privileges broken in upon.

“We solemnly declare our belief in the Christian religion, as contained in the sacred Scriptures, and with such a view thereof, as the confession of faith hath exhibited, which is hereunto annexed, fully agreeing, in substance, with the confession of faith owned by said church, time out of mind; heartily resolving to conform our lives unto the rule thereof, that holy religion, as long as we live in this world. We solemnly renew a religious dedication of ourselves to the Lord Jehovah, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and avouch him this day to be our God, our Father, our Savior, our Leader, and receive Him as our portion forever. We give up ourselves anew to the blessed Jesus, who is the Lord Jehovah, and adhere to Him, as the head of his people in the covenant of grace, and rely on Him as our prophet, priest, and king, to bring us into eternal blessedness. We renewedly acknowledge our everlasting and indispensable obligations to glorify our God, in all the duties of a godly, sober, and righteous life; and very particularly in the

duties of a church state, as a body of people associated for an obedience to Him, in all ordinances of the gospel ; and we therefore depend on his gracious assistance, for our faithful discharge of the duties thus incumbent on us. We desire and intend, and with dependence on His promised and powerful grace, we engage anew to walk together as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the faith and order of the gospel, so far as we shall have the same revealed unto us, conscientiously attending the public worship of God, the sacraments of the New Testament, the discipline of His kingdom, and all His holy institutions in common with one another, and watchfully avoiding sinful stumbling-blocks and contentions, as becometh a people, whom the Lord hath bound up together in the bundle of life. At the same time, we do also present our offspring with us unto the Lord, purposing with His help, to do our part in the methods of religious education, that they may be the Lord's. And all this we do, flying to the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of our many errors, praying that the glorious Lord, who is the great Shepherd, would prepare and strengthen us for every good work, to do his will, working in us that which will be well pleasing to Him, to whom be glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

No one can read these words without seeing that there were among them leaders of great ability, and that a lofty spirit and purpose inspired their action. Dr. Dutton, in his admirable *History of the North Church*, is inclined to think that had the founders of this church not seen the consociation in their way they would not have taken ground against it, and that they are not to be defended in their assertion that the First Church was not under consociation. Both positions are well taken, but they need not be regarded as adverse criticism. All revolutionary movements use doubtful measures. A bad state of things has in itself no provision for securing a good state of things; imperfect systems do not provide for a better system. It was not easy for these complainants to extricate themselves from a church with which they no longer sympathized; the only way out was an attack on consociation ; as a few years later the colonies declared their independence on the ground of grievances, scarcely one of which was really felt,—the real motive being a desire to secure liberty. The simple case with our founders was that a new age was coming on ; they felt its breath and were determined to realize it. The church had become dead in its orthodoxy, and they wanted a new orthodoxy, which they found at hand in Bellamy and Edwards. They had heard Whitfield, and caught the spirit of the "great awakening"

that was pervading New England, and they resolved to put themselves into such shape that they could partake of it. They awoke to the fact that consociation was not in the line of the original plan which brought their forefathers here, and they turned on it with just indignation,—somewhat hotter because it blocked their purposes. Last and not least, they disliked their minister, and observation, if not experience, has taught us that there is nothing short of a capital crime which dissatisfied parishioners will not do in order to be rid of a minister whom they dislike. It was distinctly a party movement; “Old Lights” and “New Lights” were names much used, and the torch from which they were kindled was not borrowed from heaven. Judge Pardee, in his admirable sketch of the history of the Church, (contained in our Society Records, Vol. VII), wittily says: “the more they put each other out, the more fiercely both burned.” It was better that they should part, even with all the bitterness the separation engendered. Before we condemn either party, let us ask ourselves on which side we probably should have stood; many of us would need to think twice before answering.

Of the history of the next seventeen years, I have no desire to speak at length. It was more political than religious, and savored more of the world than of the kingdom of heaven. During these seventeen years, this church paid taxes into the treasury of the First Church—a proceeding not calculated to breed peace.

In 1743, a church was built upon what is now the south-east corner of Church and Elm Streets; the lot measuring according to the original deed “about” six rods on Church St., and three and a-half rods on Elm St. In those days they measured their doctrines more accurately than their land.

Paying taxes to the First Church, hiring preachers, and building a meeting-house, made their pecuniary burdens heavy, but these were not so hard to bear as the violent opposition that came from the Old Light party which was strong everywhere in Connecticut, and especially here where the college joined with the First Church in its opposition to the new movement, though Pres. Clap had no great liking for Mr. Noyes, mistrusting his orthodoxy. But nothing helps a religious enterprise so much

as persecution, and when it reached the point of a law, as it soon did, that if a preacher should preach or exhort within the limits of a parish without the consent of the pastor and a majority of the people, he should be "arrested and carried out of the parish as a vagrant," the hour of victory had come. Under this law, Mr. Finley, afterward President of Princeton College, was arrested for preaching in Milford, and carried as a vagrant out of the State. He returned and was again transported. He came back a third time, preached to this church, and by act of the Legislature, was required to pay the cost of his transportation. This union of persecution and thriftiness sheds a humorous light over proceedings that otherwise are rather grim. They were more than humorous, they became absurd when the Association of New Haven formally resolved that no member of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, to which Mr. Finley belonged, should be admitted into any of their pulpits till satisfaction had been made for his preaching within their bounds. Probably Mr. Finley had declined to pay for the rope with which he was ecclesiastically hung. The assembly advised the faculty of the college to take all proper care to prevent the students from imbibing any of the prevailing errors, and that those who would not be orderly should be expelled. Accordingly, the students were forbidden to attend the meetings of this Church,—a rule that led to the expulsion of David Brainard. To crown all, the Act of Toleration was repealed, so that no meeting for worship was legal unless authorized by the General Court, whose attitude to this church was that of the wolf to the lamb.

Persecution so unqualified stirred up a corresponding spirit on the other side which showed itself in extravagances and fanaticism, and the two parties ran a mad race, but not a doubtful one. Legally wrong but morally right, persecuted for conscience sake, progressive, radical, reformatory,—when has such a party ever failed!

The church at first heard for a month Mr. Wheelock, who afterward became President of Dartmouth College; then Mr. Graham and Mr. Bellamy by turns, the church nearly doubling in two months from the start.

Of the building of the "Old Blue" meeting-house, and of the

action of the First Church,—remonstrating against it as a “public nuisance,” and of efforts to cut its timbers at night, and how watch was kept to thwart them, and how when an injunction was read at the raising, it distracted attention so that the frame came down with a crash, and how this was interpreted on one side as a frown of Providence on the undertaking, and re-interpreted on the other side by putting it up before night,—of all this I will not speak, except to say, how remote, how foreign, how far behind us in the world’s history it all seems! The term *blue* refers to the color of the edifice, not to the hue of the doctrines taught within it. The phrase, if used doctrinally, belonged rather to the First Church, though if the edifice of each had been painted in the color most expressive of its temper it would have been a flaming red.

For nine years—1742 to 1751—no records were kept. In 1745, Whitfield again passed through, and being excluded from the pulpit of Mr. Noyes by advice of the General Association, he preached from a platform in front of Mr. James Pierpont’s house to an immense congregation on the Green.

In 1748, a reaction in favor of the “New Lights” set in. They had thrived on persecution and revivals and had become politically formidable. The Church formed a society by “voluntary compact,” as incorporation was not to be hoped for, in order to provide for its support. Sixty men and one woman made up the society; the woman-element has been dropped out somewhere in our long history, and we now have a society composed only of men.

The first pastor, though not ordained so far as appears, was Mr. Curtiss, who served two years, a name only in our traditions. In 1751, Rev. Samuel Bird was called. His acceptance was conditioned upon the removal of the difficulties with the First Church. A confession acknowledging and condemning the informality of their secession, and the heat and bitterness of their spirit, and asking forgiveness, was sent to the First Church, but it elicited no response, possibly because of some doubt as to whether the confession was sincere, or was due to a desire to secure the services of Mr. Bird, who seems to have been an amiable man and a popular preacher. The General Court advised a Mutual Council, but Mr. Noyes stood off, and Mr. Bird was settled

by one in which the great names of Wheelock and Bellamy and Hopkins appear. The congregation so grew under Mr. Bird, that in four years the taxed members of the First Church who had gone over to the White Haven Church, threatened to outnumber those who remained. Politics now came to the front, and religion retired to the background. The First Church began to tire of its White Haven tax-payers, who in turn, forgetting their humble confession, determined to remain, and obtain their share of the property of the corporation to which they had paid taxes for fifteen years. This point was finally settled in General Court. The First Church retained the new meeting-house which it had built, while the old meeting-house, the bell and the property which had belonged to the society before the commencement of the difficulties, were declared to belong to the two societies in equal proportions, thus ending a legal controversy of eighteen years standing.

The formal division of the two societies took place in 1759, when the First Church organized the First Society, and this church the White Haven Society. In an application for incorporation made in 1757, two years previous, the designation "East Society in New Haven" was used, probably because the meeting-house was east of the "town plot" as the Green was called. Why the name *White Haven* was selected still remains a mystery.

The interesting point to my mind in this period of the history, is the readiness on the part of the members of the First Church to go over to the White Haven Church when taken in connection with the intense bitterness of feeling existing between them. How was it possible? It must be attributed, I think, to the combined influence of politics and religion. The "New Lights" were the winning party in the State; and, whatever their fanaticism and extravagance they were at least alive and earnest and effective; they deserved success and they won it.

Mr. Bird was dismissed in 1768, after a prosperous ministry. The Society had become the largest in town; the meeting-house had been enlarged and made to face the Green, encroaching on the sidewalk—if that can be said when there were no sidewalks. Mr. Bird is described as a man of commanding appearance, powerful voice, impressive elocution and sincere and zealous

piety. He was not educated at college and was not regarded as a severe student or profound reasoner. Dr. Stiles says of him—and it is all he has to say—that “he was a man of religion.” The brevity of the remark is evidently the measure of his respect.

In the same year, Jonathan Edwards, the younger, was called to the pastorate. This is the greatest name—I do no injustice to any if I say the only great name, in our list of pastors. He was the second son of the great Edwards and of Sarah Pierpont whose beauty and grace inspired in her lover a tribute of praise so compounded of passionate love and saintly devotion as to make it unique in literature. For many generations to come travelers will stand at the corner of Elm and Temple streets, and say : here is where Jonathan Edwards won the love of Sarah Pierpont. Whitfield, when he visited them at Northampton, was so envious of the “sweet couple” that he was moved to pray that God would send him also “a daughter of Abraham,” adding that he “had no choice of his own ;” of which prayer Tracy says in “The Great Awakening :” “Whitfield had not yet learned, if ever he did, that God is not pleased to make such ‘sweet couples’ out of persons who have no choice of their own.” Pres. Edwards and his wife died in the same year, leaving this son at the age of twelve to make his own way in the world, in which he already had had a good lesson, having been sent by his father, when in his tenth year, to the Six Nations in Central New York to learn their language in order that he might some time become a missionary to them. He was graduated from Princeton, came under the influence of the preaching of Mr. Finley who had been carried out of Connecticut as a vagrant, studied theology under Dr. Bellamy in Litchfield County, taught at Princeton for two years, declined a professorship and accepted a call to the White Haven Church when twenty-three years of age.

The Church had returned to a use of the half-way covenant. There had come to be at this time a type of theology known as the *New Divinity*. It was a modification of the old Calvinism, and by emphasizing the freedom of the will, afforded ground for the strenuous demands of the revival preaching for instant repentance and acceptance of God. It was stoutly opposed to the

half-way covenant as a stumbling block to religion. Mr. Edwards made the renunciation of it by the Church the condition of his acceptance, which it proceeded to do. This, along with dissatisfaction at the dismissal of Mr. Bird, stirred up an opposition, and sixty-eight persons protested against his ordination, but the council went forward and ordained him on the next day, Jan. 5th, 1769. How much, in this matter, lies hidden under the Bird interest, how much was due to the abolition of the half-way covenant and how much was due to lack of interest in Mr. Edwards who was acknowledged in after years to be a great preacher but never a popular one, it is difficult to determine.

The Revolution was in progress; passion ran high, religion was at a low ebb, the community was much divided politically, and it is not strange that the church did not present a fair aspect. After ten months of vain attempts at reconciliation, the opposition resolved to "go off and worship by themselves." They worshipped, at least it is to be hoped they did, in the State House until December of the next year, when they had built a meeting-house on the spot where this edifice now stands. This must strike us as the darkest page in our history,—a church that had covenanted to walk together, worshipping apart, divided over a question which called for toleration rather than for contention. It must be said however that the seceders were suffered by the White Haven Church to depart in peace. Seventy male members left, leaving only eleven men in the White Haven Church, though the Society was as large as any in town.

This Fair Haven Church,—all churches seemed to cling to the name *Haven*,—listened for a time to Mr. Bird, whose presence in the town may possibly explain why there were so many scruples over the theology of Mr. Edwards. One is constantly forced to confess in studying these times that the reason put forward was not the real reason. But when was it not so?

In 1773, Mr. Allyn Mather was ordained as minister over the Fair Haven Church, and served until 1784, when he died in Savannah, whither he had gone for health. The impression of him gained from tradition is that of a man of saintly character and great fidelity, feeble in health, a plain and practical preacher, earnest, affectionate and winning in manner, and a

devoted pastor. As Mr. Edwards had no pastoral gifts, the comparison was striking and told against the White Haven pastor whose church dwindled as Mr. Mather's grew. After an interval of three years Mr. Samuel Austin became pastor—November 9th, 1786. He was a native of New Haven and a student in theology under Dr. Edwards with whom he had full sympathy both as to "the new divinity" and the half-way covenant. He was settled at the age of twenty-three, Dr. Edwards preaching the ordaining sermon. These facts show that the bitterness of feeling between the two societies was passing away, and that Dr. Edwards had conquered the situation, though his personal popularity did not increase. Mr. Austin compromised on the half-way covenant, refusing himself to baptize the children of those who had half-way covenanted, but by exchange introduced a minister to his pulpit who could conscientiously administer the rite. But his path was not a smooth one. The East Plains (now Whitneyville) people drew off and formed a church, which greatly weakened the society, and the compromise on the half-way covenant worked as compromises generally do—satisfied neither side,—and Mr. Austin retired after three years to begin elsewhere a brilliant and useful career. He was settled in Worcester for twenty-five years, was president of the University of Vermont for six years, was pastor of a church in Newport for four years, and died in Glastonbury after ten years of incurable religious melancholy induced in part by disease and pecuniary troubles. The descriptions of him are very engaging and he is to be ranked and remembered along with his great teacher, the pastor of the White Haven Church.

The Fair Haven Church remained without a pastor for six years, and, Dr. Edwards having left, the two churches were united as "the Church of Christ in the United Societies of White Haven and Fair Haven,"—a cumbersome title that was shortened by the Legislature in 1815 to "The United Society."

The somewhat tangled history of our various origins has been made plain, and written upon enduring brass, as we have all seen, in the tablet which to-day first met our eyes as we entered these doors. For the thought out of which this beautiful memorial sprang, for the taste and appropriateness of the design and inscription, and for payment of its entire cost we are

indebted to one of our fellow members whose ancestors have worshipped with this church from the beginning; and I will take upon myself here and now to tender to him in behalf of the Church and Society their grateful thanks.

Thus a separation that never ought to have existed came to an end. The union may be said to mark a line between the old order and the new. What went before belongs to antiquity; what follows is modern and chiefly within the memory of the living.

Before speaking of it, which however I shall do but briefly, I will return to the ministry of Dr. Edwards. Beginning in 1769 and continuing for twenty-five years, it was characterized by unwearied diligence and fidelity, and by that sort of ability which goes along with profound study. It was not, however, a ministry which bore the outward marks of success. He followed the example of his father in confining his labors to the study, passing by pastoral labors as not well fitted for them. He was tall, erect, slender, with bold and prominent features, black hair and piercing eyes, more of the Pierpont, I think, than of the Edwards, though he resembled his father intellectually and was thought to have improved his theology. I suspect however that he simply made it exacter and more logical, depriving it in the process of that passion and *abandon* which made it almost tolerable. Better Jonathan Edwards with his poetry and passionate genius than any of his hard, close-thinking followers who have tried to improve his theology! It can only be improved by drowning it in the flood of his own deep and ecstatic nature. Better than any correction of his father's divinity was his attack upon slavery which reached the high-water mark of abolitionism before its day. The similar position taken by Dr. Hopkins in Newport, also a "New-Divinity" man, confirms the truth that men of advanced theological views are the first to lay hold of rising moral questions. The conservative is always a laggard in ethics.

Mr. Edwards spoke without notes, rapidly but distinctly, dwelling on controverted points of doctrine, and he undoubtedly made the mistake of thinking that the Gospel could be turned into an argument. And yet he could descend from the heights to very simple forms of ministration, as is shown in the incident

of his preaching to children as he had intended, on a Sunday when Washington happened to be in the congregation. It is my guess that Washington, who attended service at the Episcopal Church in the morning, passed by the larger First and Fair Haven Churches on the Green and went to the Blue Meeting House in order to hear Dr. Edwards, whose reputation was general, and that perchance the Father of his country was better satisfied than if he had heard a disquisition on man's natural ability to repent. Dr. Edwards while reflecting honor upon his pulpit and the town by his great attainments in theology, lost ground continually and at last resigned through the sheer inability of the parish to support him. There were three churches where there should have been but two,—a blunder that Congregationalism in New Haven has perpetuated and emphasized down to the present hour. Our steeples are too thickly clustered for our prosperity. The times also were not favorable to religion. His ministry covered the period of the Revolution. Men's thoughts ran in that direction, and there was much in the Churches that was counter to the new ideas of liberty that came in with Independence. Instead of throwing themselves into the new order, they busied themselves over their metaphysical theology and its nice distinctions. What thoughtful man cared whether man's ability to repent was moral or natural, when the great questions of free government were being settled on the field of battle? Dr. Edwards was not remiss as a patriot and a preacher of patriotism, but speculative theology was the ordinary theme of his discourse. The revivals had died out under their own excesses and by natural reaction, and no longer fed the churches with streams of converts. Dr. Edwards, with great dignity and patience, yielded to the inevitable and resigned in 1795.

He was pastor in Colebrook until 1799 when he became President of Union College, dying two years after, at the age of fifty-six.

Dr. Dutton calls attention to the similarity in the lives of the father and son, which is so curious that I will quote it: "Both were distinguished scholars, and were tutors for equal periods in the colleges where they were respectively educated. Both were settled in the ministry as successors to their maternal grandfathers; both were once dismissed, and again settled in retired places

where they had leisure to study, and to prepare and publish their works. Both were removed from these stations to become presidents of colleges, and both died shortly after their respective inaugurations, the one in the fifty-sixth year, the other in the fifty-seventh year of his age; each having preached on the first sabbath of the year of his death, on the text, 'This year thou shalt die.'"

It may be added that each led a stormy life in his parish; the elder was ejected from his church, and the younger was distinctly asked to resign.

The candor and directness with which the people of that day dealt with their pastors, especially in regard to theology, is something fearful to contemplate. Dr. Edwards' people deliberately discussed in 1790 which of "three alternatives" they should pursue in view of certain erroneous beliefs held by him;—first, whether they should collectively point them out and render him assistance in correcting them; or trust to his own Christian temper to correct them; or act individually—each dealing with his pastor as he thought best. Fortunately the second course was adopted, so that Dr. Edwards was saved from deciding whether he would submit himself to be corrected in his views by his flock collectively or individually. The relation of ministers to each other was not much better. In those days there were no exchanges, so far as I can learn, between the pastors of the churches here, and councils were theological battle-fields.

Very amusing is the history of the council called to settle a pastor over the First Church, in which "Old Light" Dr. Dana, who was the candidate, turned on "New Light" Dr. Edwards with a list of questions which he had brought with him. I must confess that so far as questions were concerned the "Old Light" had the advantage of the "New Light;" for though the "New Divinity" was the vital and progressive theology,—quite as radical and revolutionary as that which is now called "New Theology," it was capable of being set in a ridiculous light on such points as the *use* of sin.

Two years after the union, which occurred in 1796, Rev. John Gemmil, of Penn., was installed pastor. As I can find nothing good recorded of him except that he was "a man of brilliant tal-

ents and a popular speaker, I will pass him by. By vote of the Society he was allowed discretion as to exchanging with Dr. Dana and President Dwight, which indicates how such matters had stood previously. A better day was dawning which was fully ushered in after an interregnum of four years by the settlement of Mr. Samuel Merwin whose memorial tablet is upon our walls. His ministry of twenty-six years—from 1805 to 1831—marked the end of a long and troubled history. This Church was born in the midst of convulsions and they did not cease until the questions out of which they sprang had been settled in the world at large.

The half-way covenant—source of endless contention but not the fountain of evil which it has been thought to be,—fell into abeyance; it was created to relieve the rigors of one form of Calvinism, and it passed away under the requirements of another form. The union of Church and State also had passed away, and so the ground was cleared of these trouble-breeding institutions.

Religion now had a clear field to itself. The country was settling down to the fulfilment of its work and destiny under civil and religious freedom. Dr. Dwight was getting the New Divinity into working form in the College pulpit. The excesses of the “great awakening” had been forgotten. The ministry of Mr. Merwin is a bright page in the history of the church, characterized on his part by great fidelity and tenderness and discretion, and on the part of the people by love and respect which linger still among us, extended to his son who until of late was with us, and to his family who still remain, perpetuating by their good works the ministry of a century. More than eight hundred and fifty persons united with the church during his pastorate. It was a period of revivals throughout New England consequent largely upon the prevalence of the “New Divinity” and the re-awakening of the Puritan conscience after the long repression.

It was during his ministry that this edifice was built. After the union of the churches, services were held in the two meeting-houses alternately,—an awkward arrangement that led to the abandonment of both and the erection of this. It was built by an independent company which gave an eighth part of the pews to

the Society, and remunerated itself by selling the rest and taking the two old meeting-houses,—an arrangement that left, by previous stipulation, about \$5,500 in the treasury of the Society. The cost of the house was \$32,724.58. The architect was Mr. Ebenezer Johnson—a member of the church, who deserves to be held in lasting respect.

We have worshipping with us to-day Mr Bostwick, of Brooklyn, who was baptized in the Church the year it was finished—1815; and we have residing among us one who was baptized in the same year in the “Blue Meeting House,”—Mrs. Abigail Lee.

After Mr. Merwin’s dismissal, which was due to ill health, and another interval of four years, Mr. Leicester A. Sawyer became pastor and remained from 1835 to 1837, retiring to take charge of the Howe Street, now the Dwight Place Church, which was partly formed by peaceable secession from this church. He afterward became the President of Central College, in Ohio, making the third pastor who filled such a position. He is, I think, still living. He achieved a considerable reputation by publishing an original translation of the New Testament.

In 1838, Dr. Samuel W. S. Dutton began his ministry which continued until his death in January, 1866. I would like to speak at length, if there were time, of Dr. Dutton and of the services he rendered to this Church and to the country. I can but refer to his early and brave stand on the slavery question, when it cost something and meant something. He had abolition blood in his veins, but it was controlled by a sound and clear head.

He was not merely an anti-slavery man,—he was a *friend* of the slave. Fugitives from slavery were often concealed in his house in College St., and aided onward in their journey toward Canada—then the only free soil on the continent. What gentility of manner, what kindness in action, what sympathy and friendliness were his! What a fund of good nature and what a constant overflow of it! He was not a great man as some count greatness, but his character and his work were great. He was a good theologian, progressive and intelligent. He was an accomplished scholar in New England Ecclesiastical history, and the largest contributor to the *New Englander* in his day; he was

the faithful friend and servant of the College, as every pastor of this church ought to be, and his citizenship was of that high type which serves the nation out of the fear of God.

As I remember him, *clearness* was his strong point ; he saw things as they were and he could not easily be confused. He stated his thought clearly ; his voice, his eye, his whole manner was clear and open. Honesty, sincerity, courage, unfailing good nature and uncommon common-sense were his characteristics. His sayings still linger among us: "If I cannot preach the truth in the North Church, thank God ! I can drive a hack." To a friend who had small patience with the abolitionists, he said : "Suppose you stop kicking the abolitionists and begin to kick slavery,"—advice which was followed, and with effect upon the entire nation. Probably this community was never more shocked than by the Kansas meeting held in this church March 20, 1855, when the pastor, aided by Henry Ward Beecher, secured twenty-seven Sharp's rifles for the Kansas Company, one of which was given by Miss Dutton, sister of Dr. Dutton. The first cost of the rifle was twenty-five dollars ; the second, a good share of the patronage of her great school and no end of abuse. This church may well be proud of having on its list of ministers one who combined with all pastoral qualities a spirit so heroic and a patriotism so true and unselfish and far-seeing.

Of the ministries of Mr. Edward L. Clark who was pastor from 1867 to 1872, and of Dr. Edward Hawes from 1873 to 1884, both of whom are living and are still loved here and are always welcomed back with grateful memories and esteem, I need not speak.

Nor need I speak at length—it being more familiar to you than to me—of the incorporation of the Third Church with this by which the two became the United Church. That Church before the union, had existed since Sept. 6th, 1826, when it was organized largely through the influence of Dr. Taylor and others connected with the Theological School. Many of its members went from this church so that the union was historically in part a return. For three and a-half years its pulpit was supplied by Dr. Taylor, first in the Orange St. Chapel of

the Center Church, and then at various places until 1841, when an edifice was built on Court Street which is now the Jewish Synagogue. Here the church worshipped until 1856, when it built what is now the Public Library on Church Street. The hundred year old mistake of crowding churches about the Green began to be felt again by both the North and the Third Churches, aggravated by a heavy debt on the latter, and so most wisely the two became one in 1884.

The history of the Third Church is chiefly the history of the pastorate of Dr. Elisha Lord Cleveland, which extended from 1833 till his death in 1866. He was a man of marked ability and a preacher of both solid and brilliant qualities. His pastorate has hardly been excelled if equaled in the community, when judged by the common standards. Strong and steady, he pushed on his way for a third of a century, building up his church from the smallest beginnings to an equality with any in the city, in the face of theological difference and against social and local hindrances, but always gaining,—we have here the signs of a wise and able pastor. The theological difference is forgotten and he is remembered only as a bright and honored name on our list of pastors.

He was preceded by Mr. Charles A. Boardman who served the church from 1830 to 1832; and he was followed by Dr. Dan. S. Gregory, and Dr. David Murdock, and Dr. Stephen R. Dennen who was installed in 1875 and remained until the union in 1884.

Of our history since I have no occasion to speak.

It would be easy to draw lessons from this review were it a profitable undertaking; but the questions over which the founders strove, and divided, and united again, the theologies, the measures are so far behind us, and so remote from present habits of thought and have so little to do with present methods of action, that the lessons would have little significance. We must make our own history as they made theirs. We have our questions and they are questions of to-day and not of past days. We have our methods upon which we depend for building up the kingdom of God, but they are not the methods upon which our founders relied.

But a lesson remains for us still. In all this troubled history there was the Puritan conscience and the Puritan love of righteousness. It gave dignity and strength and moral force to all that they did, and it held them steady to a cause which was true in spirit to the original purpose that brought their fathers to these shores. In such a light, we can afford to forget their unlovely strifes, the extravagance of their measures, the triviality of much of their theology. When so viewed, we remember them with gratitude, and the victories they won are such as we are proud to honor.

Historical Sketch of the United Society,

PREPARED BY

HON. HENRY E. PARDEE,

Clerk of the Society,

AND PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 28TH, 1879.

FOR many years prior to 1742 there had been a tendency towards the formation of two parties among the Congregational churches of New England, which, about that time, in some of them, developed into open contest, mostly turning on the question, who should be pastor.

The intimate relation, established at the first settlement, between church membership and places of honor and trust in civil affairs, must have brought many into the Church whose motives of Christian duty were diluted with motives of ambition. The natural effect of this, doubtless, was to produce some laxity of practice and greater laxity of sentiment among church members, in relation to qualifications for membership, and this again had an effect on the spirit and tone of preaching and worship.

The existence and tendency of this condition of things was apparent in the opinions advocated more or less decidedly by different Congregationalists. Some claimed that those baptized in infancy ought to be regarded as members of the church for all purposes, except partaking of the Sacrament, without awaiting a change of heart. Some claimed that unbaptized persons might have their children baptized on professing a regard for God and a general desire to serve him. This was called the doctrine of the "Half-way Covenant." Some claimed that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was a Saving Ordinance, and that any one, desiring to become converted or to meet with a change of heart,

might partake of it as a *means* of grace. Each and all these claims were sternly combatted.

The prevailing tone of religion had, from other causes, become generally very much depressed throughout the country. But about the year 1735 there began a series of revivals which lasted seven or eight years and extended all over the Colonies. The famous Whitfield visited New England in 1740. His style was demonstrative and sensational. Many imitators sprung up in his path. In their meetings they committed great extravagancies, to the intense disgust of those favoring sedateness in worship. In their preaching they were exacting in regard to clear religious experience and beliefs, as affecting Christian standing, and they held up the *terrors* of the law with special fervor. They aimed to make their preaching what they called "searching." They had the spirit of reformers, evidenced in part by their attacking those more conservative, and calling them, and especially their pastors, hypocrites and unconverted men.

The other side retorted, and sneered at them as "New Lights." Many other unloving names were probably exchanged. As is usual, especially in church controversies, the more the Old Lights and the New Lights put each other out, the more fiercely both burned.

Although, in this Colony, the practice of the churches had not been formally relaxed as to the membership and the ordinances, still, Mr. Joseph Noyes, pastor of the First Society and Church in New Haven, belonged decidedly to the Old Lights as to the style of preaching and worship, as also did the College Faculty and the great body of settled clergy and public officials.

The first recorded movement towards the formation of this, our Society, was the presentation of a petition, signed by thirty-eight persons, to the annual meeting of the First Society, December 28, 1741, asking leave for the signers to go off and form a society by themselves, for the reason assigned that they had "found by long and sorrowful experience that the preaching and conduct of Mr. Noyes was unprofitable to them, and they suspected he differed from them in some points of faith."

At that period the pastor was settled for life. The society was bound to give him a comfortable support. Everybody residing in the town, except those belonging to the Episcopal Society, be-

longed by law to the First Ecclesiastical Society, and their property in the grand list was subject to taxation for its support, very much as at this day persons belong to the school district in which they reside, and their property is subject to taxation for school purposes.

After this petition, in terms offensive to the pride of Mr. Noyes and his friends, and proposing to deprive him of part of the dignity and importance of his position, and the Society of a considerable part of its strength, had been discussed, the record, very naturally, reads that it was voted to do nothing about it.

It is evident that from the time of this vote, for a period of seventeen years, there was trouble in the First Church and Society. The petitioners became obstructionists. At the January Term of the County Court, held the 4th Tuesday of January, A. D., 1742, they obtained leave to worship by themselves, under the law known as the Toleration Act of William and Mary, by which means they were exempted from penalty for not attending the legally constituted church, although not relieved from their share of its support.

On the 25th day of the same month, Mr. Noyes led his church (or Society) formally to adopt the Saybrook Platform, by the provisions of which church disputes were to be referred to a council of the Consociation, which was composed of the neighboring churches of the county with their pastors. This was a political move to secure a favorable referee, the Consociation being thoroughly in accord with Mr. Noyes. The Separationists desired to retain the right to form a council by selection from other churches, and that such council should have only advisory powers. They argued that Mr. Noyes and his adherents, by adopting the Saybrook Platform, had tried to change the discipline of the Church as it had always been, and were to be regarded as seceders, leaving themselves the *real* First Church and Society. The force of a decision of a council of the Consociation was a subject of controversy among the churches of the Colony, some claiming that it was to be binding on all, and others that it was only advisory, to be followed only as it should commend itself to the judgment of the church in question, on further consideration. The friends of Mr. Noyes claimed that the vote was only declaratory of what had been a fact ever since

the Saybrook Platform was formed, and that the First Church in New Haven, with its pastor, had been present and taken a considerable part in its adoption by the Council at Saybrook.

On the 22d of March, 1743, Mr. Joseph Burroughs and his wife, Lydia, conveyed to James Pierpont, Jas. Talmadge and Joseph Mix, a Committee of the Separatists, a piece of land measuring Northerly on Elm Street three and one-half rods, and Westerly on Church Street six rods; and, soon after, the "Separatists" began to build a church thereon.

On the 18th of April, 1743, the First Society voted 'that the same was grievous to them,—that they esteemed it very hurtful to the public peace of the Society, and that a Committee represent to the Separatists that their doings therein were unlawful and hurtful and esteemed a public nuisance, and that the committee invoke the General Assembly and the law, if thought advisable.' There was very general opposition in the community to the building of the church, and it is said that the timbers were sawed by enemies, in the night, so that watchmen had to be employed until the building was completed. Meanwhile the Separatists worshiped in Timothy Jones' house, the large wooden building on the Northwest corner of State and Court streets, pulled down by Governor English, in 1878.

On the 27th of February, 1748-9, a Covenant was entered into, forming a voluntary Society, binding the members by express contract, and on the second Monday of the next March, John Curtiss was called to preach, "Ordained or unordained." He remained until sometime in the year 1750. On the 20th of June, 1751, Samuel Bird was called to succeed him, and was installed October 15th, 1751. After the incorporation of the Society, Mr. Bird was formally called again February 7th, 1760, and remained over the Society until his dismissal, January 19th, 1768.

Soon after the presentation of the petition above mentioned, some attempts were made to harmonize differences by taking steps to appoint a colleague for Mr. Noyes, but nothing came of these attempts. It is claimed, and it seems likely, that Mr. Noyes did not desire a colleague until some time later.

It became necessary about 1753, for the First Society to have a new church. The movement for this purpose was followed

by remonstrances to the General Assembly on the part of the Separatists, against being taxed. Agents were appointed to appear before the General Assembly in behalf of the respective parties. As the controversy progressed, two years later, the First Society voted to ask the General Assembly to allow it to tax itself, leaving out the Separatists, or to form the Separatists into a new Society. To every vote contrary to their wishes in this matter the Separatists caused their protest with their signatures in large numbers to be entered upon the records.

The friends of Mr. Noyes had become desirous of getting rid of his opponents, but they seem, at about the same rate, to have lost their desire to go. The questions of disposing of the common property very much affected the positions of the two parties. The former wished to retain all the Church and Society property; the latter hoped to retain it, if they could maintain their claim to be the original Society, or, at least, to secure for themselves half of everything.

At last, on the 10th day of January, 1757, a vote was passed, without protest, to ask the General Assembly to divide the Society, decide which should be the First, and to divide the property equitably, and further providing that the members might choose their Society by signing their names in the records under the heading of "Mr. Noyes' Party" and "Mr. Bird's Party," respectively. The strife between these two factions entered largely into the politics of the day, and there is no doubt that the pressure of public opinion, especially of the General Assembly, desirous of securing peace, secured consent to the above vote. Nothing appears in the records about electioneering, but we may readily believe that where there was so long and earnest a struggle, there was, in this test hour, no lack of electioneering effort. The result was that 111 persons entered their names in the Noyes Party, and 212 in the Bird Party.

On the 13th of June, 1757, the Bird Party, finding themselves in a decided majority, carried a vote in the Society meeting rescinding their former action as to a division, and to recall their memorial, voted a call to Mr. Bird as pastor, and adopted the meeting-house on the corner as the place of worship. This was the meeting-house on the corner of Church and Elm streets. The

other party then took the position of protesters, and long lists of their names signed to protests are entered on the records. In October of the same year, a vote was passed, under similar protest, asserting that there was no valid contract with Mr. Noyes, and that for this reason, and because he did not go to the corner church, they would not pay him any salary. But a suit of law, brought by him, compelled payment—one instance in which the law has compelled the church to do righteousness.

Again in the progress of the contest, and under the influence of public sentiment, and especially the sentiment of the legislature, the vote of January 10th, 1757, was in substance renewed by a vote of January 8th, 1759. Finally, the General Assembly, at its October Session, 1759, ratified these votes and incorporated the Separatists, 166 men and 13 women, 179 in all, under the name of the "White Haven Society." The others were by name included in the First Society, 132 men and 15 women, 147 in all. There was provision made for those omitted from these two lists or becoming subsequently qualified by residence or age to elect which Society they would belong to, or, if not, to be assigned to one or the other. The new Society was to own one-half interest in certain specified property of the First Society, after the death of Mr. Noyes, but the Church in the First Society retained all their property. It was provided that the bell should belong equally to the two Societies, and should be rung for the meetings of each. Thus after about seventeen years of strife, our Ecclesiastical Society became a legal corporation.

Reverend Samuel Bird having asked dismissal on account of his health, he was dismissed January 19th, 1768. His successor, Jonathan Edwards, the younger, was soon after invited to preach and was ordained and installed as Pastor on the 5th day of January, 1769.

There was great dissatisfaction in the Society, partly on account of the dismissal of Mr. Bird and partly on account of the settlement of Mr. Edwards. There was strong opposition to Mr. Edwards on account of his doctrinal views. There were various attempts at reconciliation, among which was talk of an associate for Mr. Edwards. It is difficult at this day, to see how a colleague to Mr. Noyes in 1742, and one for Mr. Edwards

in 1769, satisfactory in each case to the opposition, could have secured harmony of views.

Those dissatisfied with the ministry of Mr. Edwards, went off to worship by themselves on the first Sabbath after Commencement, in September, 1769. On the 19th of the same month, they applied to the "Proprietors" for a building-place on the Green, which was granted on the 3d of October. The church building was so far completed on the 25th of December, 1770, that a committee was appointed to plan and dispose of pew ground. On the 21st of October, 1772, articles of organization were executed among the members. On the 31st of December, 1772, Allyn Mather was called, and installed February 3d, 1773. In January, 1774, the new organization was incorporated by the General Assembly, under the name of the Fair Haven Society.

From this time there were occasional attempts to reunite the three societies, and especially the two younger. Mr. Allyn Mather having died Nov. 12th, 1784, and his successor, Samuel Austin, (installed Nov. 9th, 1787), having been dismissed January 19th, 1790, the Fair Haven Society remained without a settled minister. Mr. Edwards having been dismissed on the 19th of May, 1795, the way was open for a reunion of the two societies, which, after proper negotiations, was effected by a legislative act in October, 1796, the new Society being called by the name of the United Society of White Haven and Fair Haven. The property of each was kept distinct, and worship was conducted in the two meeting-houses alternately.

Since the reunion the pastors have been as follows: John Gemmil from Nov. 1798, to Nov. 22, 1802; Samuel Merwin from Feb. 13th, 1805, to December 29th, 1831; Leicester A. Sawyer from June 2d, 1835, to Nov. 20th, 1837; Samuel W. S. Dutton from June 26th, 1838, to Jan. 26th, 1866; Edward L. Clark from Jan. 3d, 1867, to July 17th, 1872, and Edward Hawes from Sept. 17th, 1873, to the present time.

In 1764, (March 26th), the White Haven Society asked leave to extend their church far enough to the West to widen it twenty-three feet, and to place a steeple sixteen feet still further West. When the addition was completed, it extended the steeple entirely across what is now the sidewalk in front of St. John's

Block, so that people coming down from the gallery through the steeple, walked out to the North and South upon the sidewalk. This meeting-house was painted blue. The pews were all square except four pews or slips for men and four for women on the two sides of the center aisle next the pulpit, which was at the East end. Many of the present members can recollect the horse-block, which consisted of a large junk of trap rock, nearly square, with natural steps, standing, until a few years since, on the Northeast corner of Church and Elm streets.

The Fair Haven meeting-house and the old brick meeting-house of the First Society, about which there had been so much protesting in 1753, stood facing each other along the line of the present sidewalk in front of the North and Center Churches, the steeple of the former being at the South end and that of the latter at the North end. The pews of the Fair Haven Church were originally all square; subsequently the body pews were changed to slips. The pulpit was at the North end, and there were outer doors on the three other sides. On an old picture of the spot a brick school house is shown between the present site of the North Church and Elm street, and a "Sabba-day House" at the Northwest corner of the lower Green. "Sabba-day houses," (connected with the churches), were as common in those days in connection with meeting-houses as carriage-houses and stalls are at this day in the country.

In December, A. D. 1812, after the discussion of various plans, a contract was entered into between the Society and twenty of its members, that the latter should build the present church, and should have the ground of the White Haven Church, the two old church buildings, and the proceeds of a certain proportion of the pews of the new church, for their reimbursement. The steeple of the White Haven Church had been already ordered to be pulled down. On the 4th Monday of December, 1812, a vote of the Proprietors of Common and Undivided Lands was passed, authorizing the erection of the new house. On the 29th day of November, 1815, the new meeting-house was accepted, and dedicated in December. Some things remained to finish it, and it was finally reported complete November 28th, 1817, at a cost of \$32,724.58.

After the new meeting-house was decided upon, as above,

there was no need for so ponderous a name, and on the second day of May, 1815, upon the petition of the Society, the Legislature changed the name to its present form, **THE UNITED SOCIETY.**

The church was built during the last war with Great Britain. It is said that the lumber on its way by water from Middletown, was intercepted by the British fleet off the harbor, but was allowed to pass because intended for this church. When the messenger announcing the signing of peace went through New Haven, the church was at worship in the White Haven house, and the news was proclaimed there.

In old times there were no means of warming the churches in Winter. Each church had one or more Sabba-day houses, in which there was a generous fire in a generous fire-place, to which those not living near, and not having intimate friends living near the church, resorted on Sunday noon to get warm, partake of their lunch, and replenish their foot-stoves for the afternoon sitting. These were probably owned and maintained by members of the Society combining together. There is no mention of expenses for heating in connection with the services until 1827. On the 20th of January, 1820, a proposition to have stoves in the church, after discussion, was voted down; also a similar proposition December 22d, 1824, but on the 12th day of December, 1827, the committee were authorized to put them in. Still there was great opposition to this innovation. It is said that one lady was so overcome by the heat after the stoves had been put up, that she was carried from the church in a fainting condition, but this was not considered a strong argument against the stoves when the fact came out that they had not been connected with the chimneys, and no fire had been kindled in them.

In 1850 the church received a thorough renovation. The old tall pulpit was taken away, the alcove made, the seats rearranged, most of the square pews along the sides changed to slips, the walls frescoed, two glass chandeliers like the present central one, but smaller, dispensed with, gas introduced, furnaces for heating placed in the cellar, and the church refurnished.

An organ was put into the church by individual members in the year 1818. This organ was surrendered to the Society in

1850, and exchanged for another at an additional expense of \$3,000. In 1868 this second organ was sold, and with the proceeds and the aid of private subscriptions the present organ was bought, at a total cost of about \$7,000.

The White Haven Society bought a lot and built on it a house for Mr. John Curtiss. They endeavored after the conveyance to him to get a covenant from him to re-convey in case of his leaving, but failed and had to buy the re-conveyance. This place was voted to Mr. Bird on condition that he should pay what had been paid to Mr. Curtiss for the re-conveyance, and it was retained by him on his dismissal. Sundry pieces of real estate in which the White Haven Society had a share, were sold soon after the death of Mr. Noyes. When Dr. Edwards was settled, the Society bought a house and lot for him, which was afterwards in part paid for by him. Since the dismissal of Dr. Edwards the Society has not furnished a parsonage.

By the thoughtful care of Mrs. Catherine St. John Phelps, an opportunity was given the Society, in her will, to purchase the lot 112 Temple street, with the house and furniture, at an appraisal. The purchase was made in the summer of 1877, at a cost of \$18,400, the amount necessary, after using the legacy of Lois Chaplain, being subscribed by individual members.

In the year 1803, by a special effort, a permanent fund was raised for the support of the minister. A considerable portion (perhaps all) of this was lost by the failure of the Eagle Bank, about 1826, since which time the Society has had no permanent fund for general purposes.

Until the year 1833 the current expenses were chiefly sustained by a tax on members based on the Grand List of the town, but this system gradually failed of the object and tended to the change of people to other societies. As early as 1748 contributions were taken up on Sundays for the benefit of the ministry, and if anyone enclosed his contribution with his name it was credited on his tax, otherwise it was a gratuity. This seems something like the envelope plan, which we have lately found good.

In 1833 the plan of taxing individuals upon their general property was abandoned, and in its stead was adopted the plan of assessing the owners of pews enough, with such money as could

be raised by renting pews owned by the Society, to pay the expenses. About the year 1867 a special effort was made to induce the owners of pews to give or sell them to the Society. Some were given and many were sold upon notes of the Society. Most of these notes have been taken up, so that now only a few are outstanding, and the Society owns all the pews except four or five and perhaps some equitable interests in gallery pews. A list of all the property now owned by the Society or by the Church and the resources of each will appear by tables reported at this meeting.

The history of our Society, especially its unwritten history, is not without examples of what I regard as a grave defect in the Congregational system. The habits of our clergymen, the nature of their duties and of their public efforts, and the delicacy of their position, as to receiving beneficial and improving criticism, have the effect to fix them, each in a style and manner of his own and to prevent him from progressing with the changing wants and tastes of the times. As he gets old, he fails to attract the new comers and the Society is compelled, as a vital thing, to supersede him.

When a man has given any Society the prime of his life and, in their service, has, in a great measure, unfitted himself to get a living elsewhere, turning him off with a piteous fraction of a year or two of support is an act of cruel injustice. Some method ought to be devised by which a minister may have at least some feeling of independence as he advances in years. Some method ought to be adopted to prevent the abandonment of an old and faithful servant and friend for the sake of a new liking, if we would save our institution from just reproach.

It appears that in the early days of our Society, women were members, by the Sovereign will, thirteen (13) having been by name incorporated into the White Haven Society, two having joined it by choice, and ten (10) having been assigned to it afterwards by a committee of the General Assembly. They were doubtless made so because they were property holders, or heads of families, and to be taxed. I do not find that they ever voted, and it is probable that, if the petition of White Haven Society

